

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A valve shield comprising a substantially planar shaped sheet of material structured for affixing to an annulus of a cardiac valve having first and second leaflets, said shaped sheet of material being of substantially uniform thickness and having a surface area and a surface configuration substantially matching a substantially total surface area and a substantially total surface configuration of the first leaflet of the valve, and shaped complementarily to the second leaflet so as to be substantially wholly contactable by an edge portion of the second leaflet of the valve, whereby to facilitate interengagement of the second leaflet edge portion and an edge portion of the sheet of material to effect closing of the valve.

2. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the shaped sheet of material when affixed to the cardiac valve annulus prevents prolapse of the first leaflet.

3. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein a total surface configuration of the shaped sheet of material ~~total surface configuration~~ is substantially crescent shaped.

4. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein ~~the~~ a total surface area of the shaped sheet of material includes at least one opening therein.

5. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein ~~the~~ a total surface area of the shaped sheet of material is substantially solid.

6. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the shaped sheet of material is of a structure capable of being affixed to the annulus of the valve with sutures.

7-11 (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the shaped sheet of material comprises non-biological material.

13-17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing regurgitation in a cardiac valve having first and second leaflets and an annulus, the method comprising:

providing a valve shield comprising a shaped sheet of material having a surface area and configuration substantially matching ~~substantially an~~ the entirety of the surface area and surface configuration of the first leaflet of the valve, and the shaped sheet of material having an edge configuration complementary to an edge configuration of the second leaflet of the valve; and

affixing the valve shield to the annulus of the valve so that the shield substantially overlies the ~~substantial~~ entirety of the first leaflet of the valve, to facilitate closing of the valve by edge to edge contact between the edge of the shaped sheet of material ~~edge~~ and the edge of the second leaflet.

19. (Previously Presented) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein said shaped sheet of material is provided with an outer periphery at least in part shaped complementarily to at least a portion of the annulus of the valve.